

Application Number 10/763,948
Amendment dated 17 May 2005
Reply to Office Action of 27 April 2005

Remarks

No new claims have been added, and Claim 18 has been cancelled. Therefore, Claims 1–17 and 19–41 remain pending in this Application. Claims 1, 16, 30 and 36 are independent.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claims 16, 21 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,190,976 ("Shishiguchi") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0046766 ("Asakawa"). Claim 16 is independent.

Claim 16 has been amended to include the elements recited in dependent Claim 18, which the Examiner has acknowledged as containing allowable subject matter. Therefore, Applicants submit that Claim 16 is allowable, and respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn. Furthermore, Claims 21 and 22 depend from independent Claim 16, and further distinguish the invention of Claim 16 from the cited references. Therefore, Applicants submit that Claims 21 and 22 are allowable over the cited references for at least the same reasons that Claim 16 is allowable.

Claims 17 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shishiguchi in view of what the Examiner considers to be Applicants' admitted prior art. Claims 17 and 27 depend from independent Claim 16, and further distinguish the invention of Claim 16 from the cited references. Therefore, Applicants submit that Claims 17 and 27 are allowable over the cited references for at least the same reasons that Claim 16 is allowable.

Allowable Subject Matter.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that Claims 1–15 and 30–41 are allowed. Applicants also thank the Examiner for indicating that Claims 18–20, 23–26, 28 and 29 contain allowable subject matter. Applicants have amended Claim 16 to include the elements recited in Claim 18, and therefore respectfully submit that Claim 16 and its dependent claims are now allowable. Claim 18 has been cancelled.

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Conclusion.

In view of the foregoing amendments, the Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully request the same. If, however, some issue remains that the Examiner feels can be addressed by an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned for authorization.

Respectfully submitted,

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